

The Civil Notes

DISABILITY AWARENESS

Special Edition

The Farm Service Agency Office of Civil Rights

FSA Hosts Field Day for the Department of Rehabilitative Services

Special points of interest:

- CR&SBUS is renamed to Office of Civil Rights (OCR).
- Sharon Lynn Holmes is appointed new Director of OCR.
- FSA begins partnership with the Department of Rehabilitative Services.
- USDA celebrates Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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The FSA recently partnered with the Maryland Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) to benefit both DORS and the USDA. This groundbreaking partnership allows USDA access to a large hiring pool of individuals with disabilities. An additional benefit is the extensive training that DORS can provide to FSA's headquarters and field Offices. FSA will provide DORS customers with unpaid work experience at headquarters and in our field offices.

Kicking off this partnership, FSA hosted a "Welcome to USDA/FSA Field Day" on October 24, 2002. It was held to introduce DORS customers to FSA and to the department. Deborah Eyer, Chief, Equal Employment Opportunities Branch, facilitated the event. She introduced Mr. Lou Gallegos, Assistant



FSA Administrator, Jim Little makes comments during the program.



Assistant Secretary for Administration, Lou Gallegos speaks at the FSA Field Day for the Department of Rehabilitative Services Customers.

the workforce. Many of the participants commented afterwards that having the Assistant Secretary and our Administrator speak, raised their confidence that this will be a successful partnership.

The morning proceeded with a panel covering the topics of hiring, support organizations within the USDA, and the Target Center's accommodations. Nicole White, FSA Disability Employment Program Manager, Barbara Beitscher, APDA, and Bruce McFarlane, Target Center, spoke on these topics respectively.

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the participants to pursue being an active part of

CR&SBUS Welcomes New Staff



Jeffrey Hayden is our newest staff member. He joined us as an Equal Opportunity Assistant. He came to us via the private sector as an employee in banking. He has a wealth of customer service and automation skills and is a welcome asset to our team. He is currently attending Prince Georges Community College earning his associate degree

The Equal Employment Opportunity Branch would like to announce

that Mr. Robert Grant has been permanently reassigned to the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. He will be detailed to the EEOB to work as an EEO Specialist.



Vincent Encinias, a Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Intern, began work for the EEO Branch under Deborah Eyer. He assisted specialists with many tasks and

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FSA Field Day for DORS continued



Bruce McFarlane and Barbara Beitscher represented the Target Center and APDA respectively.

attendees and was a highlight of the day.

After a luncheon in the rear of the cafeteria, the group divided into three smaller groups. They continually rotated

between three activities. The first was a video showing in the Target Center with the assistance of Shelita Smith. The customers watched marketing videos on the USDA and another specific to jobs available within FSA. The second activity was a guided tour of the Target Center. Michelle McGrath served as tour guide. The final activity was a mock interview session. This allowed all of the DORS customers to interview with two different interviewers, receive an assessment form, and also provide their resumes

Mr. Don Gearing, FSA employee, provided the group with a tour of the USDA Headquarters. Don's breadth of headquarter building knowledge continually astounded the



Don Gearing hosted a tour of the USDA Administrative and South Buildings.

to us. The resumes will be used for future employment consideration. Conducting mock interviews were William Haig, Ronald Holling, Deborah Eyer, Holiday Jones, Vincent Encinias, Catherine Thompson, Steve Jones, and Robert Grant.

Certificates were presented to the customers for their participation at the end of the day. DORS staff, led by Mrs. Carol Haig, presented FSA with a plaque to thank them for their organization of the event and working towards strengthening the partnership.

The FSA Office of Civil Rights would like to thank all participants of the event. This is only a first step on a long road of making the partnership a success.



DORS take notes during presentations by the panel members.



Cleatus Robinson, Disability Awareness Program Manager, presents DORS customer Bruce Hanson with a certificate of appreciation.



Cindy Labon (above) and Alethia Johnson (below) received certificates of participation as two of the many DORS customers in attendance.



Cindy Labon (above) and Alethia Johnson (below) received certificates of participation as two of the many DORS customers in attendance.



(L-R) Robert Grant, Vince Encinias, unidentified, Carol Haig, Cleatus Robinson, Deborah Eyer, and John Davis (not pictured) were the coordinators of the program.



DORS customers look on.

New Staff continued

will be converted to co-op status on December 6, 2002. At that time, he will return to New Mexico to finish his degree and work out of the NM State Office. Mr. Encinias will return to Washington upon completion of his degree.

Charles Glenn, comes to the PCIB staff from the Rural Development

Agency. Prior to that, he was employed by the Department of Defense. Charles has an extensive background in Counseling and Informal Complaints. He will be working with the PCIB on compliance issues. Mr. Glenn has over 25 years of federal service. The FSA Office of Civil Rights would like to welcome each of them.

Disability Employment Awareness Month Events

Gallaudet University Dance Troupe Performs for USDA

FSA employees were treated to laughter and awe during the performance of the Gallaudet University Dance Troupe on October 11, 2002. The event was held in the Jefferson Auditorium of the USDA South Building.

H. Steven L. Newbold II, Deputy Director, Office of Civil Rights, served as facilitator for the event. He introduced Mr. Ira Hobbs, USDA Deputy Chief Information Officer, who provided remarks. Mr. Hobbs spoke on the need for activities such as this to increase



Dr. Newbold served as host of the dance program.

diversity awareness.

The group of 16 performers performed several dances that demonstrated the groups many varieties of dance styles and skills. Several of the students participated in several skits between the performances. These provided humor throughout the show in addition to allowing the dancers time to change into costumes required for the next performance.

The event was coordinated by the Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service (FFAS) mission area. The coordinators, Cleatus Robinson (FSA), Sae Mi Hong (RMA), and Saundra Holt (FAS), were able to schedule the performance with the help of Terry Thir, Department Disability Program Manager, and Nicole White, FSA Disability Employment Manager.

After the performance ended, the Deputy Director distributed bags containing several parting gifts to the performers. The students were surprised to find out

that he was skilled in sign language as well as resided as a dorm director on Gallaudet's campus several years ago.

Attendees commented on the skillfulness of the performers afterwards and many said they would like to see the performers return in the future.



Gallaudet Dancers take a bow after their performance.



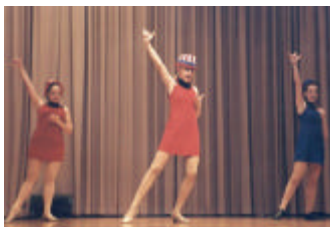
Between performances, dancers performed comical skits.



Disability Awareness Program Manager, Cleatus Robinson, assists Dr. Newbold with distributing bags to the dancers.



A highlight of the performances was Gallaudet's performance to "America".



FSA Hosts Women with Disabilities Panel

On October 22, 2002, the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Federal Women's Program and Disability Awareness Program sponsored a panel discussion entitled "Women with Disabilities in the Workforce." The panel took place in Washington, DC, in Room 107A of the J.L. Whitten Building, and was one of many events that took place during October in observance of National Disability Awareness Month. The panel was a historic collaboration of two special emphasis programs with the purpose of shedding light on issues of particular concern to women with disabilities. The Office of Personnel Management's mandate for the Department of Agriculture to hire 9,000 disabled individuals by the year 2005 further intensifies the need to uncover the difficulties employees with disabilities face in the workforce.

Panel members included Barbara Beitscher from FSA's Information Technology Services Division; Linda Dallos, a web master with the Foreign Agricultural Service; and Therese Wiley from the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Information Technology Division. The panelists each shared information about their personal and professional backgrounds and then focused on a particular topic of interest to them. Ms. Beitscher discussed the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, which is a

government-wide summer internship program for disabled college students that is sponsored by the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Department of Defense. Ms. Beitscher also informed the audience about the Secretary's Advisory Council on Employees with Disabilities (SACED) and the Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture (<http://www.apda.usda.gov/>). Ms. Dallos talked about interpreting services and Therese Wiley discussed the importance of assistive technology.

After the panel members finished introducing their topics, audience members were given the opportunity to make comments or direct questions to the panelists. Audience members asked excellent questions and a great deal of important information was dispersed to participants. Panel participants and audience members alike expressed gratitude for the organization of the panel and interest for further information on this important subject.



The CR&SBUS Receives a Name Change and New Director

SHARON LYNN HOLMES, M.S. Named as New Director of FSA Office of Civil Rights

Effective November 2, 2002, several offices in the Farm Service Agency's National Office underwent name changes. The Civil Rights and Small Business Utilization staff was renamed the Office of Civil Rights. The Civil Rights Branch was renamed the Compliance and Program Analysis Branch to better reflect what is done there and to avoid ambiguities given the new name of the Division.

Sharon Lynn Holmes, M.S. has been appointed the new Director of the FSA Office of Civil Rights (OCR). She replaces H. Steven L. Newbold II who will return to duties as the Deputy Director of FSA OCR. Mrs. Holmes comes to us from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA). There, she served as Director of EEO, Civil Rights and Small Business Programs since September 1998. She comes experience that includes: Title VI Programs, Title VII Complaints adjudication and alternate dispute resolution programs as well as the small business program.

She has worked with federal programs in affirmative employment, special emphasis programs, minority academic institutions, administrative, financial services and budget, and human resources. She intends to bring this breadth of experience to the FSA workforce.

Originally from White Sulphur Springs, WV, she now resides in Mitchellville, Md. Ms. Holmes is married, has three adult children and five grandchildren. She is a graduate of the OPM Federal Executive Institute where she was voted Class 2002 Representative. Ms. Holmes has a B. S. in Psychology from George Washington University and an M.S. in Human Resources Management from the University of Maryland.

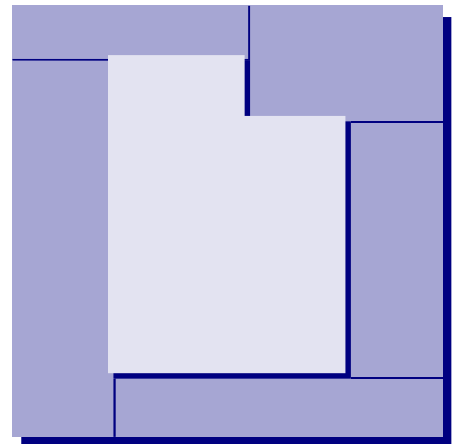
We would like to welcome her onboard.



Utah Participates in Disability Employment Awareness Month

On October 21 we held a joint disability awareness program with NRCS and RD. Our speaker was Chad Hymas, a young man who was disabled in April 2001 in a farm accident. Chad spoke to us for 45 minutes about his accident and how he and his family have coped with his disability. He did a wonderful job! Nearly all the women in the audience were in tears when he finished and several individuals expressed their interest in having him speak to their local youth church groups. We are also going to ask him to address our COC members in February, 2003, at a statewide training.

- Robin Sadlier, Utah State Office



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